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ENGLISH CATHOLICISM AND RECONSTRUCTION

Three Addresses given at S. Mary's, Graham Street, W. on the Thursdays in Advent, 1918

BY THE

REV. F. UNDERHILL, M.A.

Vicar of S. Alban's, Birmingham

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ENGLISH CATHOLICISM AND RECONSTRUCTION

I

CATHOLIC UNITY

IT is a settled habit of many earnest persons to say at any and every time that that particular moment presents a unique opportunity for the furthering of their cause, whatever it may happen to be. They tell us that this is the tide which, if taken at the flood, will sweep us on to fortune. They assure us solemnly that if this opportunity, which has never come before, is allowed to slip, it will never return ; that it is now or never.

After such an introduction it may seem somewhat bold to say that there is now before us such an opportunity for the spread of religious ideas as has really never come before to us. And yet, surely this time it is true, and most people agree that it is true. The long-established order has come to an end ; the whole world is in a ferment ; new ideas are arising, and old convictions are being relentlessly criticized. The blessed word reconstruction is being cried at every street corner ; and at the foundation of all reconstruction which has any hope of permanence must be the idea of spirit, and the domination of religion.

So we shall do well to address ourselves to the most careful thoughts as to the part which religion, and for us more particularly the part which English Catholicism, will have to play in reconstruction ; both among ourselves and in relation with the wider movements outside our own immediate circles. In the three addresses which I am allowed to give here I propose to deal first with the need for Catholic unity, and the plans which are being evolved

to bring it about; secondly, with our own ways and methods, and the likelihood of their making way in the English Church of the future; and thirdly, with movements in the English Church generally, and more especially with the Life and Liberty Movement and its connection with the Church and State Report.

(1)

To get back, then, to our starting point. It really is a unique opportunity for us; there are signs everywhere that Catholicism is gaining a new attractiveness in many directions, at least in the case of persons already interested in religion. Reform is in the air, and open confessions of failure are common, together with a far less prejudiced way of looking into methods once suspected and despised. Many of the wisest Nonconformists are looking towards a religion of authority and order; some of them are joining us; others are forming such societies as the Free Catholic Movement, which, however erratic it may seem to be in some ways, at least is looking in the direction of a Catholicism we can understand. Moreover, we are feeling, and shall feel yet more, the holy contagion of a revived French Church. There is also a much more cordial feeling at home among many who were once strongly divided, shown, for instance, in the existence of better personal relations between ourselves and the larger-minded Roman Catholics, and a growing understanding with the Orthodox Churches of the East. And through all this we are sure—we hope we may say it without arrogance—that here in England the future lies with the Catholics of the English Church. We believe that we represent, however feebly as yet, the future of English Catholicism. I think it is becoming clear that, though there have been and will still be a fairly large number of individual secessions to Rome, and though rough times lie before us in the immediate future within the Church of England, yet there is not going to be any large corporate move among the clergy, and still less among the laity towards immediate reunion. I do not comment

further on this belief, except to repeat that the future for the vast majority of us is likely to be within the English Church.

We are strengthened in this view by a consideration which I must speak out boldly, though I am sure that it will bring much criticism upon me. What matters to us is not so much the Roman Church of the present as the Rome of the future. The wisest Roman Catholics tell us, with a sigh, that some of us are eagerly adopting elements of popular Roman Catholicism of which they would most gladly be rid. The Roman Church has reformed herself in the past; some of her most thoughtful sons and daughters hint not darkly that there are reforms to come in the future. Shall we not do wisely if we try to keep our eyes fixed on the dim but splendid future, rather than on the immediate present?

So, then, we believe that the future of English Catholicism, as well as much of the future of English religion generally, is in our unworthy hands. In this sense we are greater than we think; at least more responsible than we quite realize. How, then, are we to face the great days which lie before us?

(II)

It is a vast question, and opens up far more ideas than could be dealt with in many such addresses as this; but there seems to be one ideal on which we must fasten, because at the moment it is of essential importance in view of the campaign before us—there must be unity amongst ourselves as Catholics within the English Church. We must agree somehow as to what we want, and how we propose to gain it. It is true that in the last hundred years our cause has made wonderful progress; it behoves us all the more, therefore, to act wisely and charitably at a critical time such as this.

We all want unity, and we are all trying, in our various ways—or we ought to be trying—to get it; but we are not always very successful. Let us examine the two methods which attract the greatest number of persons who are

trying to think out this most difficult problem. The first is the ideal of uniformity of method and practice among English Catholics. People are saying that there is too much diversity ; that some men are moving too fast, and doing light-heartedly things which others cannot do ; that they are leading in directions which others cannot follow ; in fact, that they are unduly "forcing the pace." And so many are crying "Hold—enough!" while those in front cry "On."

Thus there has come a certain danger to the armies of Catholic progress. "Let the trimmings go" is another phrase much in use at the moment. But the people who say these things do not seem to realize that such watch-words beg the whole question as to what are the trimmings, and what is the solid material. What they mean is : let us agree on what is essential, and all press for that—we can afford to leave the rest for the time at least ; let the foremost go more slowly, in order to bring the others along with them ; let us agree to present a united front.

Indeed it would be an ideal plan, if only it were workable ; but I believe it is impossible, because of the present condition of the Church of England. I am not at present touching the question whether it is expedient or inexpedient that we should have a stronger authority over us, or that we should go on as we are ; I am only looking at the facts as they exist ; and, when you combine these facts with the workings of human nature as it is, you can see that the uniformity plan is simply unworkable. If there were no such thing as Western Catholicism at our doors ; if there were no vast body of Catholicism accepted equally by East and West as to doctrine and practice, which is far from being allowed by all who claim the name of Catholic in England ; if our ideal were obscure and shifting, instead of being so clear as it is even when we qualify it by the vision of the future days—then we might be able to agree upon something less than the whole, as a working compromise. But, things being as they are, you will never be able to stop the more enterprising men from going forward. There will always be the impetuous and the cautious, the older and the younger men (I do not mean

merely as regards years). I believe that in this sense the idea of a uniform Catholic front cannot at present be realized.

(III)

There remains another plan for the realization of Catholic unity ; it may be less heroic and less perfect than the other, but it is at least more practicable. We can begin, anyway, by tolerating one another. This does not appear to call for any excess of enthusiasm or even of charity, but it is sometimes overlooked. A short time ago a rather friendly bishop said to me, " Ah, so I hear there is a church now which even —— " (naming a well-known " extreme " parish priest) " cannot visit ; it is too much even for him ! " It was not true ; his lordship had been misinformed ; but it will serve as an example of a certain cleavage which is perceptible among us. There is no need to hide these things ; most of us know all about them ; they represent what is, I hope and believe, a passing phase of our movement brought about by somewhat rapid developments which have taken place during the war ; but the sooner this phase is passed the better for all concerned. Well, we cannot be uniform yet ; the front must be ragged for a time ; some are less advanced than others. It is a consequence, as we have seen, of the present position of the Catholic Movement ; but we shall do well if we recognize the fact and adapt our attitude to it. Our points of agreement, as we all know, are incomparably greater than our temporary divergencies ; it would be disastrous indeed if our unity were imperilled and our progress retarded by differences of opinion as to policy, or the advisability or inadvisability of doing certain things which after all are of secondary importance, though they may happen to figure somewhat prominently at the moment.

Let us take a concrete instance : Benediction. Well, Benediction is coming into the English Church as surely as to-morrow's sun, though it may be some time before it is widely adopted or universally allowed by authority. Some have it, others do not find themselves able, for one

reason or another, to have it at present ; others, again, think that they will never have it. You cannot help these diversities of opinion ; they are merely the repetition of history. But we ought all to be able to make up our minds to tolerate those who do not agree with us ; only too often different opinions as to policy are made the ground of serious and unnecessary divisions. There is only one way out of the difficulty : those who have Benediction should be thankful, and refrain from condemning those who have it not ; and those who do not have it should be careful not to speak hardly of those who have. After all these courageous and enterprising people are preparing the way for the rest. And, moreover, it is well for those who oppose extra-liturgical devotions to the Blessed Sacrament to remember some words lately written by Dr. Darwell Stone. He says : " Whatever the history, and whatever the expediency of the rites known as Exposition and Benediction, the doctrine which underlies those rites is the true doctrine of the Catholic Church." This is high authority, and should prevent us from making statements lightly which conflict with it.

And so I believe that the true way to Catholic unity at the present moment is through mutual gentleness, forbearance, and toleration. There can be no doubt that the Lord Christ is doing a great work through many of those Churches where Benediction has been adopted. Would it not be well for those who are not at present in the forefront of advance to forbear from any harshness of criticism? If we are to bear our part in the great work of spiritual reconstruction, we must be united, and we must keep our minds open to the influences of new and perhaps at first unwelcome ideas. Uniform we are not, and cannot at present be ; tolerant we can be. And, where toleration exists among those who are faithfully trying to serve our Lord and to spread the kingdom of God, understanding and love will soon follow.

" Sirs, ye are brethren.

II

VISION AND LEADERSHIP

WE were thinking last Thursday about Catholic unity, and possible means of gaining it; and I ventured to propose that by mutual toleration we might hope to reach something like agreement; though toleration in itself might perhaps not carry us very far. Since then I have had opportunities of talking over certain matters with a fair number of the younger people; and, as a result, I have somewhat modified the way in which I meant to use the two remaining addresses that I am being allowed to give you here.

We have come to the conclusion that, the time being so great and urgent, and the importance of immediate action so pressing, it is necessary to cast away suavity and reserve, and to say plainly what we think. The younger people are very nearly in despair about the condition of what we have to call for want of a better term the Catholic Party in the English Church. They see the opportunity for reconstruction, for forward movement, for the bringing in of souls; but they see also the gravest danger that the opportunity will be let slip through inertia, unimaginativeness, and division in our ranks. The truth is that we are not ready for the occasion; little or nothing is being done, or else it is being done so haltingly that it is of small use; reform among ourselves is the first and most pressing need.

It is not necessary to say much about our inspiring cause; but I want to give one illustration which may rouse us to take some kind of action. Ever since the Catholic Revival began we have been waiting for the proof of the power of our method, a proof which would be decisive and convincing; and now we have got it. We

have sent our boys to the war, and for four years we have been watching them. We had taught and trained them ; by far the greatest number of them had always lived rather sheltered religious lives in their own church and parish, cared for by priests who knew their business. When they joined the Army they were cast entirely on their own spiritual resources ; they were tested in the fiery furnace of an atmosphere which was not only not religious, but was actually full of every incentive to sin of the worst kinds. They have been splendid; the great majority of them have kept nobly true to God in their Church and Sacraments ; they have fought wonderfully the battle which is far worse than worldly warfare ; and we are in a position to claim that, wherever the Church of England may have failed, the Catholic method has not failed. I say we have been waiting for this test for many years, and now we have our proof. Now we know. But we know too that there are many thousands of young men and women in England who are capable of being taught and held in the same way. And why, then, are results generally so disappointing ? It is a fact that, while in many places up and down the country there is a glow of Catholic life, in only too many other places the results are not what they ought to be. It cannot be said that the Catholic cause prospers as it should. But with such a cause, and such assured results as we already have, everything should be ours. What hinders ? That is my question for to-night.

I want to make it perfectly clear that in what I am going to say I am not putting simply my own point of view or my own experience. These opinions are shared by very many men and women, priests and laity, to my certain knowledge, and I am sure, by many more of whom I have never heard. So what I want to discuss is some of the causes of failure which seem to us to be prejudicing our great and immediate opportunity ; to try to see what, in the minds of so many of the younger people, is amiss. No doubt there are other causes ; but there are some which we are agreed are the chief troubles.

What hinders ?

(1)

First, lack of vision. It is pathetic—it is more than pathetic, it is tragic—to be present at many meetings of Catholics, especially clergy, at the present time, and to hear the kinds of subjects which are being discussed. The world is rocking all around us; stupendous things have happened in the last six months, the like of which have never been before, and which mean everything to us; and we still worry ourselves about such questions as whether the tabernacle door should be opened or shut during devotions; or whether the Catholic cause will be irretrievably lost if the laity are admitted to a fuller share in the deliberations of Church assemblies; or whether we shall wear red or green vestments on the thirtieth Sunday after Trinity.

Or take another symptom. In place after place you get priests and congregations thinking, apparently almost to the exclusion of everything else, about the prosperity of their own little corner: whether they have a good congregation or a large number of communicants, or the "full ceremonial use of incense"; and apparently knowing and caring scarcely at all about the larger life of the Church, or even about the troubles or joys of parishes in the immediate neighbourhood; joining in nothing, helping nobody; perfectly satisfied in themselves, and simply uninterested in anything else. How is it possible to get corporate life or corporate advance when you have to deal with such people?

Again, you get those once great Catholic centres which have a name that they live, and are dead. Once all was well; but that was long ago, and the glory has utterly departed. The unhappy priest struggles on, surrounded by his attenuated little band of faithful, who in spite of all still hold to him; and the teeming population passes by untouched. Nothing is done, and souls are being lost. The priest will not or cannot resign, though his work is long done and finished; and you read in the newspapers the glowing accounts of the festivals, when for once a congregation gathered from other churches fills the usually

empty building. Indeed we are sorry for such men ; but can nothing be done to remove them ? You may think this is a detail ; but it is not. It is only too common, and is one of the great reasons why the Faith does not prosper, and why our adversaries are able to attack and belittle our cause. There are plenty of vigorous men who could transform all that, and cannot get the chance. There is no vision.

Or take a wider sweep, and think of the multitudes of English Catholics, especially priests (who are the leaders), who spend their lives steering a vagrant and uncertain course between the Scylla of Rome and the Charybdis of Anglicanism, never knowing exactly where they are, and drifting alternately to the rocks on either side. Or those others whose Catholicism appears to be largely founded on detestation of the Church of Rome—whose whole vision is distorted by hatred and fear of Western Catholicism. You could understand this in the case of Low or Broad Churchmen ; but it is hard to reconcile such an attitude with the position of those who claim the name of Catholic, while persistently and bitterly disavowing all sympathy with the unrivalled work for God which is being done by the mother of Churches. Or think of the other kind of persons, who apparently dare not move a finger or think a thought which has not been permitted by the popular Rome of to-day ; who consistently belittle and despise the English Church and all that belongs to it. They are horrified if it is even suggested that they have any connection with such a body, and seem to think that there is really nobody worth associating with in the Church of England. They regard all English Church movements with undisguised amusement, and go to no meetings or conferences. These, surely, are just as narrow, just as undignified, just as blind, as those who hate Rome.

Even more difficult are those many Catholics who refuse to join in any new movement on the ground that they are dissatisfied with some small detail in the scheme ; they will brush aside all that is good in it because of some trifling matter of phraseology, or because they are not entirely satisfied about the wisdom of some quite minor

proposal; or—I hate to say this, but I know only too bitterly how true it is—on some merely personal ground. I dare not say more on this subject, lest I should be thought uncharitable; but we cannot spare some wounding at this time; the case is so desperate that only strong measures are at all possible. These are the kind of things which are blinding us as a body, so that we can see no visions. There is great need of personal sacrifice. Upon us the ends of the world are come; we ought to be taking the biggest views, our hearts full of sympathy for one another and all the world, while faithfully preserving the integrity of our ultimate broad convictions. Instead of that we are still busying ourselves with our trifling sectional affairs, bothering our heads about the paltry controversies of yesterday, and the most futile and undignified personalities. No wonder that people think little of us, and say that we don't really count; for they do say that. We want vision.

(II)

And, secondly, we are hindered because we have no leadership; and that is largely why we have no vision.

A writer in the *Commonwealth* for December, 1918 (p. 345), says:—

> "The Catholic Movement has passed from the defensive to the offensive. An offensive, it is true, without unity of command or agreement as to objects. . . . And thus, deprived of supreme direction, and lacking the guidance of experience, unconnected forces have begun an offensive with no agreement as to aims and painful confusion as to objectives."

That is true; we have no leadership. And here I must say a few words about those great Catholic societies, some of which used to lead us, but lead us no longer. Paralysis seems to have fallen upon them. Why is it? Once, if Catholics wanted a lead or an inspiration, they knew where to go for it; now, on very many important matters, Catholics do not even seek advice or leadership there; they do not expect to get it. I do not say a word

against the experience of years; let us use it to the full. But the danger of old age is that the old should, without knowing it, shut their hearts and ears to the young; or, still more dangerous, should play with the young. To ask the younger men for advice, to applaud it when given, and to do nothing, is a course of action very likely to lead to disaster. And see what is certainly happening to our great societies. Already many vigorous men and women have given up going to their meetings, central or provincial. They cannot bear the atmosphere; they are weary of the long discussions of what seem to them often to be trivialities; they are impatient of the darkening of counsel by many words. And so it comes about that those who are members of the society lose interest, and try to work things out independently in their own way (often with unhappy results), and the keenest people who are not members do not join.

Now the consequence of this is that there is no settled policy in the Catholic Movement to-day; no plan of action, but a great deal of the spirit of "wait and see." The bodies of which I have spoken are fruitful of criticism; they see quickly enough the weak points of new proposals, but they have little to offer which is constructive. The writer in the *Commonwealth* whom I have already quoted says: "The bodies from which light and guidance are expected have emerged from the era of persecution with a strategy so defensive in conception as hardly to allow of the contemplation of an offensive. They have built a defensive line which has proved impregnable, and they will not willingly desert it for open warfare."

That is only too true. No wonder we are disheartened when we see so great a cause losing way, and becoming confused and weak for want of vigorous leadership. What we demand is reform of the bodies which used to lead us, and could, if they were reformed, do so again. They want young life put into them; they want to pass through the fires of regeneration. And it is because they are so important; because if they were destroyed to-day they would have to be built up again to-morrow, that we demand reform without delay. Now is the time; we are

losing our chances; every other live body in Church and State is reconsidering, reconstructing, readapting. Are we Catholics alone going to hesitate and falter our life away? We want leadership; to be perfectly frank, and, to use the name I have been hinting at all through, we want to be led by the English Church Union. I have a profound belief in the possibilities of that great society. It could lead us in the future as in the past. It has the organization, the reputation, the power to do it. What hinders?

(III)

I shall be blamed, I know, for what I have said to-night. I shall be said to have exaggerated my case. I shall be accused of extravagance and impatience, possibly of uncharity. I do not mind at all, because I know I am in good company. I have very many friends among English Catholics, old and young; and during the last few years I have had opportunities over and over again of talking to them. There is nothing I have said to-night which has not been said to me scores of times by Catholics of all classes, conditions, and ages. The matter was bound to come to a head when the problems of reconstruction faced us, with peace. We have power in abundance; we are throbbing with it; we could do anything; but our forces are diffused, erratic, disconnected. If only they could be concentrated on the work of winning England for the Faith, what wonders could be done!

And if it be objected that what I have said to-night is itself rather critical than constructive, I can only promise that next week I will try to outline what seem to me and to very many others to be possible lines of reconstruction. It can only be a contribution to a vast subject; but I am sure that every Catholic is bound to add what he can to the solution of a problem which is our life.

III

RECONSTRUCTION AND OFFENSIVE

LAST Thursday I was trying to say what in the opinion of a large number of the younger Catholics is hindering the progress of the movement in which we are all so tremendously interested. I ventured to suggest that what we want is more vision—a wider outlook—for all who call themselves Catholics, particularly for those who should be the leaders ; and also that our forces are dissipated and many of our opportunities lost for want of vigorous leadership ; and with some hesitation I mentioned the question of the reform of the great society by which we desire to be led. I have had great encouragement since last week from many people, old and young ; one very well-known priest wrote : "Go on, and say it again—and next time add that older men are dissatisfied . . . as are other people."

To-night, greatly daring, I am going to try to express very briefly and imperfectly—for time is short, and these matters are vast—some of the main outlines of what we want if we are to bear our true part in the reconstruction of the national life. And here, of course, it is necessary to narrow the field of our inquiry, keeping to the points of special interest which concern us as Catholics who are burning to extend widely the blessings which we so richly enjoy. I am proposing to leave on one side, though I am very far from forgetting, such huge problems as the interest we are all bound to take in social questions, or the prospects of Liberal Catholicism, or our duty towards the missions of the Church abroad, or the reunion of Christendom. These are the ultimate interests ; if I leave them on one side to-night it is because I am convinced that if we are to act with effect concerning them we must first

of all be prepared to intervene as a corporate body, with aims and principles agreed among ourselves. As individuals we never forget these problems ; but we should be vastly wiser and more powerful if we acted all together.

As to our aim, I imagine that there is no question. However interesting or important other things may be, what we want is to be the instruments in God's hand for the spread of Catholic doctrine and practice here in England ; and that because we are convinced that the method of the historic Catholic Church for conversion and edification is the most efficient ever known, and appeals to a wider circle in human nature than any other ; that its influence is less affected by differences of temperament than other systems ; and therefore we who are in process of regaining that method in the English Church are out first and foremost to commend and spread it. It has already gone far and done much ; we know that it can achieve in the future results beside which the past will be as nothing. How, then, are we to set to work ?

(1)

Two considerations are preliminary.

1. (This is of primary importance.) *The Catholic Movement has passed from the defensive to the offensive.* Once let us grasp that fact and our whole outlook is changed. There have been many years of persecution ; persistent efforts have been made ever since 1840 or thereabouts to crush the movement ; and it is now clear that those efforts have entirely failed, and that whatever may be done in the future to make us to cease will be equally unsuccessful. But the result of the years of persecution has been that we have got into defensive habits, and do not realize our true position. We go on doing what we believe to be right, and meeting opposition when and where it comes. But now we have got to do much more than that. We do not want to persecute anybody ; God forbid ! But it is essential that we should realize our strength and use it. We have got to say that we will not submit to persecution any longer ; we know our cause, and its greatness, and we

are determined that it shall triumph. There must be no private parleying between individual priests and individual bishops on matters of principle; every case must be submitted to the judgement of bigger bodies; that is where the importance of the Federation of Catholic Priests and the E.C.U. comes in. I do most earnestly beg my brother priests to bear this in mind, and not to act on their own responsibility: united we stand; acting individually we too often fall. And, further, it is necessary to get out of our minds the self-suggestion that we are a weak and persecuted body. We have our proof of the success of Catholicism, as we were thinking last Thursday, and we must put away as cowardice the least suspicion of an apologetic attitude; we are on the offensive. In this connection let me say in parenthesis that one of the most vital parts of our offensive must be a full and complete understanding between the North and the South. We in the South are often blamed for unbrotherliness. I can only say that some of us have striven with great vigour lately to get our brothers in the North to join in a general organization for offence and defence; and we have not met with any great encouragement, except in one or two of the northern dioceses. But if our offensive is to be successful everybody must be in it.

Further, is it not time that very many Catholic parish priests took their courage in both hands and advanced very much more quickly? We find that the best people everywhere are wanting Catholicism; but they want it whole, and not extracts from it. I know how urgent the temptation is to go cautiously; but the times are such that any priest would be well advised to put away a good deal of his caution and go boldly forward. Catholicism is an ordered system, and, as is the case with all ordered systems, to take parts of it and isolate them from the rest always leads to weakness. I well remember staying some years ago with a parish priest in the North whose "Use" was that commonly associated with linen vestments; on my remonstrating with him he told me that I knew nothing about the North, and that the people simply would not stand the extreme practices I was able to impose on the more gentle

Southern temperament. But in the course of a few days I went to another parish not ten miles from his, where an out-and-out Catholicism was the method used. The people were exactly of the same class, and a little further North; but the congregation in the latter parish was larger, and everything far more flourishing than in the former. Only the method was quite a defensive method in the one and offensive in the other.

2. And that leads to our second preliminary thought. "You use such words as 'all' and 'out-and-out,'" say some people; "what do you mean?"

What we mean is the acceptance of the whole system of faith and order which is common to the historic Catholic Churches of East and West; all, that is to say, which was already believed and practised by the Undivided Church up to the Great Schism in 1054, and all that has the tacit consent of the different parts of the unhappily divided Church since then. If only all of us in the Church of England who call ourselves Catholics would unite in accepting what is certainly Catholic in the true sense, and would get rid once for all of the idea that the Church in this country has a doctrine and discipline peculiar to itself, how many hesitations would be put away! We shall never really progress until we have accepted without recrimination and with unanimity the full implications of our claim to the word Catholic. But that means clear and persistent thinking out of the position; and that is what multitudes of priests and laity have not yet done. We shall not unite until they have. It is one of the primary necessaries of our reconstruction.

(II)

Following on these preliminary considerations:—

1. Having thought our position out we shall need next to formulate our policy and our demands. We want to tell the bishops, and the other members of the English Church who do not understand us, what we are really out for, because they do not know. Take an instance: most of them do not in the least realize that the proposals for

the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, over which the Convocations have spent so many weary years, leave us quite cold. The wildest and most revolutionary suggestions which have commended themselves to a majority of either of those august bodies do not approach the radical changes we want. Generally, when we talk to bishops or other representative Anglicans, or read of their utterances about us, we see that our aims and methods are almost unknown to them. Not long ago I had hard work to convince some eminent Evangelicals that we do not urge our people to hear Mass as a substitute for receiving Communion; and a few weeks ago a dean asserted publicly that we tell our faithful they have not done their duty unless they have heard Mass twice on a Sunday, which is absurd! These are details; but they illustrate the need for our making a statement of our whole position which will be widely read. We must put out boldly, and if need be at length, what we believe, what we want, and why we want it. Now, that would have to be the work of many conferences among ourselves; and that is, I believe, one of the things we must get to at once.

2. And as we met together to prepare a statement for the general public, the first and inevitable and most blessed result would be a far closer understanding between ourselves. I said in the first of these addresses that what we can go for first is not uniformity but toleration; let me go further and suggest that understanding without strict uniformity is easily within reach if we act with wisdom and charity. At the conference I have in mind I should want all varieties of English Catholics to be represented, and all to speak the unvarnished truth (as they see it) to one another. Not with the intention of capturing one another, or moderating somebody else, or pulling somebody else on, but with the determination not to separate finally until a sufficient understanding had been reached to ensure the unity of our ultimate purposes. Then an executive could be chosen to take the supreme command. The events of the last four years in the history of war have taught us lessons we can never forget about the power

which comes from agreement as to aim and a central authority for action.

I have been asked to say a word on a point of underlying importance. What about authority? Well, of course, that is what we all want to get at; but what is the use of blaming this or that person for disobeying authority when we are so little agreed as to what our ultimate authority is? Let us get that straightened out, and all the rest will follow as a matter of course. The question is only another reminder of the patent need for conference and understanding.

It may be said with hope that already things are moving in the right direction. The Federation of Catholic Priests is finding its feet, and beginning to get much good work done, though there are very many priests who ought to join it and have not yet done so, at both ends. Some find the Federation too "extreme," while others find it "hopelessly moderate"! Well, that is just an instance of what we all deplore. It is quite certain that we shall not for a long time agree on every point; but surely there is enough in common between us to make a very satisfactory working understanding easily possible.

3. But if this is to be there will have to be also a good deal of individual sacrifice. There are elements in the Catholicism of all of us which those who do not agree with us call cranks or prejudices. We have always been accustomed to say and believe that these people are wrong, and that what they call our "craze" is really a vital matter. I believe there is a great deal of unnecessary division here, and that we should all do well to reconsider and re-examine to see whether, after all, it may be possible for us to sacrifice what so many people, whom otherwise we trust, declare plainly to be foolish or unnecessary. How much clearer the air would be if we would all do that! What I should like to see would be a coalition between a reformed English Church Union and a widespread Federation of Catholic Priests. To such a coalition, which would include both clergy and laity, surely we could all agree to submit. This ought to be perfectly practical politics. Why can it not be carried out?

(III)

So much about our interior affairs as Catholics. Now let us throw the net wider and consider (again very briefly) our relation with the English Church generally :

1. Is it still necessary to urge Catholics to interest themselves in the affairs of their dioceses and rural deaneries ; to get on to committees and to go to them in moderation ? Time fails ; I cannot stop on this point, but I am sure we do no good whatever by merely standing outside and criticizing. Let us go in and bring our whole influence to bear.

2. But I think I can best illustrate what I want to say about this aspect of our offensive by speaking of the Life and Liberty Movement. There is no doubt whatever that it is already a big thing, and is going to be bigger. Already priests are joining at the rate of one hundred a week, and the laity at the much greater rate of about one hundred a day. We cannot ignore it ; what are we going to do ?

For a long time many Catholics have been hesitating as to the right course to take in regard to the movement. Their minds have varied from time to time, and it has been extremely difficult to come to a decision. I am now speaking only for myself in the first instance, though I hope that many others who on general matters would agree with me will think that the time has come when we must declare ourselves.

I have been a member of the council of the movement from an early time, and may claim to know the situation as it really stands. I have shared *all* the fears which Catholics have expressed. I have twice nearly resigned my membership of the council. It will not be supposed, therefore, that I speak lightly when I say that I believe we ought to throw our power into the support of the movement, so far at least as the pressing of the Enabling Bill, which is the present objective, is concerned. I can best give my reasons for this belief by dealing briefly with the objections to the policy of the movement which are more particularly felt by Catholics. It is said—

(*a*) That if the reforms desired by the Life and Liberty Movement should come into force they would seriously prejudice the advance of the Catholic cause. That is to say, the movement is known to be generally in favour of the latest form of the scheme outlined in the Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State.

And is our cause, then, so weak? Do we really believe that any combination of hostile forces—supposing that the adoption of the report would make such a combination possible—can really crush us? I will not believe it. I am convinced that if the worst comes to the worst our aims are so great that they could never be allowed to fail. The Catholic Movement will not be so easily overthrown.

On the other hand, I do very strongly believe that if we hold out against the movement, which has in it so much of the best life of the English Church, we shall greatly accentuate the danger some of us dread so much—I mean growing isolation. We might easily be forced into the position of a small, narrow, exclusive body, without freshness or influence; cut off, not only from those whose general theological position is different from ours, but also from many who on essential points are with us. We have an opportunity before us of uniting on certain great matters; are we going to throw it away from fear of possible danger to a cause already so powerful and so attractive?

(*b*) It is objected that some of the positions taken up by the movement are theologically unsound.

This, I believe, is not so. If the scheme of the Selborne Report were enacted even with the proposals which are most objectionable to some of us, it could not be called theologically unsound. The English Church would then have a constitution analogous with that of the American and Colonial Churches in communion with Canterbury; we do not call these Churches uncatholic.

(*c*) It is said that if we help to bring in the Enabling Bill we shall be directly assisting the legal enactment of the objectionable clauses in the Selborne Report.

But this also is not so. The Bill merely provides for

the setting up of machinery by which reforms and other things the Church desires could be obtained in a less cumbrous and dilatory manner than at present. There would still be full opportunities of discussion and modification of the report.

(*d*) It is urged that Catholics get on better in the present state of muddle than they would if the English Church obtained self-government.

With this cynical argument I have not the faintest sympathy. A very distinguished member of the E.C.U. has lately said: "The Report of the Archbishops' Committee is the work of a number of good men, some of them well-instructed Christians. It has . . . some mistakes or imperfections; but these are incidental, and can be omitted or removed. With these corrections (which I certainly think should be made) it represents a valuable and the only existing contribution towards the improvement of the relations of Church and State."

The Life and Liberty Movement is a generous attempt to remove ancient and gross abuses from the life of the English Church, and to provide for her greater efficiency for her work. It does not deal with strictly theological matters; it is not bound by statements which may appear in the *Challenge*, nor to opinions which persons may see fit to attribute to Dr. William Temple. It gives to Catholics an opportunity for exerting their influence, which, in my opinion, they will do wisely if they take. It does not require us to sacrifice any part of Catholic doctrine or practice; on the contrary, we may well claim our right to fuller life and liberty than we now possess.

It is true that a majority of members of the council of the movement have decided in favour of the baptismal franchise; but they have explicitly said that those who do not agree with that qualification are welcome to stand in with the movement. I feel, with many others, that it is impossible to accept such a basis of representation, and that it must be withstood with all our power; but it is understood that on that and other points we dissent from the general policy. I am not going out of the movement on that account. The objective now is simply the passing

of the Enabling Bill; when that is done we shall be perfectly free to reconsider our position if we wish to do so. This has been explicitly stated by the council.

What we want, I think, is a new and bolder and friendlier policy in our relation with the rest of the English Church, and now is our chance of starting. Let us come into the Life and Liberty Fellowship with a full desire to help, and at the same time with uncompromising faithfulness to our Catholic convictions.

(iv)

I have left to the end that which underlies all schemes on reconstruction; I mean the power of prayer, and more particularly of united prayer. And here I want to come back once more to the idea of conference. How often we rush into meetings at which we are going to discuss the most serious and controversial matters really unprepared for so great a work! We stand and say the "Our Father" and "Hail, Mary!" and perhaps the Collect for Whitsun Day or the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity—many not arriving in time for these—and then start to work at once. I should like to see all conferences between Catholics—or, for that matter, between all people interested in religion—beginning with a Mass at which all would be present, followed by prayer or meditation together, and only then by discussion. The difference of atmosphere which would surely result would do much to revolutionize our religious gatherings, and to bring into them a more cordial spirit of unity and concord.

For that is the secret of all real progress. I am deeply thankful to know that a guild for priests is now being started which will bind them to a minimum but sufficient rule of the spiritual life and to certain hours of serious study each week. This is the real way of Catholic advance. Let us first strengthen and reconstruct the interior life of the clergy, and the effect on the laity will soon be obvious enough. Reconstruction must begin with the foundations.

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